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## Nation Has the Admiral Gone Adrift?

*So ask critics of CIA's Turner*

**"H**e's an innovator and a shaker," says an admiral. "But he couldn't command a rowboat. He can't get along with people." Observes a former CIA director: "I get the distinct impression that he doesn't know how to run that place." Declares an old agency hand: "He's a disaster."

The object of this criticism is CIA Director Stansfield Turner, 55, who last week was being blamed by critics for the CIA's failure to warn the White House months ago that Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was in danger of losing his throne. Only two days after the Shah went into exile, the House International Relations Committee began hearings on the Iran crisis and the CIA's inability to predict its outcome. Acknowledged a CIA official: "The agency will go through a wringer. We'll take our lumps."

Most of the bruising will probably be inflicted on Admiral Turner, who has been a controversial figure ever since Jimmy Carter appointed him CIA director nearly two years ago. Within the agency, many officials complain that Turner is autocratic and aloof. He has a reputation for relying heavily on "gadgets," such as sky satellites and computerized interception of overseas communications. As evidence, Turner's critics cite his decision in 1977 to cut about 800 employees from the CIA's clandestine Directorate of Operations. All but 10% of the reduction was in the department's staff at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. Nonetheless, intelligence community members claim that in 1978 the CIA was so short-handed it could not assign people to investigate two suspicious situations abroad. Just what they involved was not disclosed, but one covert official commented: "It doesn't do you any good to know how many tanks are at the border if you don't know what is going to be done with them."

Turner's brusque and distant personality may be his biggest handicap outside the CIA. He does not get along well with National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. He lacks the finesse to soothe CIA critics on Capitol Hill. He has even had his knuckles rapped by his boss. Last November, when Jimmy Carter wrote a memo to a few top advisers criticizing the low quality of their political reporting on Iran, it was interpreted as a scolding of Turner. Understandably, since he is the coordinator of all U.S. intelligence activity as well as head of the CIA.

**D**efenders of Turner and the CIA blame any shortcomings on others. They contend that since the 1960s, a decade after the agency helped put the Shah in power, the CIA has been under White House orders to stay away from his enemies to avoid giving the impression that U.S. support for him was weakening. Moreover, only the U.S. Ambassador had the authority to report to Washington on political conditions in Iran.

Turner is far from cowed by the criticism. He notes that he had predicted last July in a TIME interview that Iran would be the next diplomatic hotspot. He also insists that one of the faultfinders' main targets, a favorable assessment of the Shah's situation that was leaked in August, was only an early draft and had been sent back by him to be made more probing.

The CIA director says he is not worried about low morale. "I've been through it in the military with Viet Nam," he says. "We pulled out of that." He adds: "I'm taking this agency through some very important changes. How do you set it up so it runs 200 years? You shake some crockery." To complaints that he is too remote, he replies: "People tell me to get out and walk around the building. But look at that desk. I have work to do."

Turner claims that his subordinates' morale "hasn't affected the output of the organization." Senior officials in other U.S. intelligence branches and in some foreign embassies agree. Whatever Turner's personal unpopularity, his agency's performance is respected by its peers.

At the White House, Turner is seen as a disappointment. But Carter and his top aides believe that the CIA has been pounded too hard for too long, that five directors in six years is too many, and that another upheaval might produce chaos at the agency. Thus the CIA's troubled past may be Stansfield Turner's best guarantee of retaining his present job. ■



Turner in his Langley, Va., office